"Since Mr. Brough Smyth has gone as thoroughly into the subject of stone implements as circumstances will allow, it will be well to lay the matter before the reader in his own words. Having described how, for the purposes of investigation and comparison, several stones used by the Tasmanian aborigines, and now in the Museum of the Royal Society of Tasmania, were lent to him, Mr. Smyth continues: 'They are nearly all chert or cherty varieties of metamorphosed sedimentary rocks, obtained, probably, from the neighbourhood of granite or porphyry. Mr. Cosmo Newbery agrees with me in the opinion that, while some of them have been split by hand from larger blocks, others are fragments of rocks [156] occurring naturally, and selected because they were of suitable form. These fragments...have been treated in one way only; having selected that which appeared to be the best for a cutting edge, the native has improved it by simply striking off small flakes all along the edge, and from one side of the edge only. This has been done, however, with so much skill, in all cases, as to keep the line straight. It is not a serrated edge. It would appear that the fragment was held in the palm of one hand, with the edge outwards, and that with a piece of stone in the other hand, blows were given towards the palm and away from the edge, until flakes were detached in such a manner as to leave it even and sharp. Some specimens, however, have been detached by one blow from a larger rock. These exhibit a semiconchoidal fracture, and having a good

edge, have not been subsequently altered by chipping.... Amongst Mr. R. Gunn's specimens, there are two scalpriform implements, very skilfully made. One, the best, of a triangular shape, and with a remarkably sharp cutting edge, has been improved by striking off flakes--in size from a sixteenth of an inch to a quarter of an inch--from the base of the triangle; and the other, a smaller stone, about three inches in length, and two inches in breadth, formed in the same way, is scarcely inferior. These were evidently struck off by hand from some larger blocks, and afterwards improved in the manner described. The first was found near Westbury, and the other near Ross.... The largest stones do not weigh more than six or seven ounces, and the smallest are not much heavier than the chips of black basalt used by the natives of Victoria for cutting and cleaning skins.... None of them were provided with a handle, and it is not probable, judging from the shape of them, that the native had even the protection of the opossum skin for his hand.... The greater number--nearly all of them--may be classed as fragments of metamorphosed rocks, cherts, and porcelainites. Owing to having been buried for a lengthened period, many are coated with a thin yellowish-brown or grey skin. I can state with certainty that not one of them has been ground, nor in any case has been attempted to give an edge by grinding.'"

Mr. Smyth then quotes the following statement of Mr. James Scott, received through Mr. Ronald Gunn:--"'Memorandum on the Stone Implements used by the Aborigines of Tasmania, found at Mount Morriston, eight miles south from Ross, on the east bank of the Macquarie River, on Lot 78, Parish of Peel, County of Somerset: The space over which they were found is about [157] three by five chains, or one acre and a half, in a sheltered bend of the river, at the head of a deep lagoon, above one mile long, the Saltpan Plains lying to the west, and the hills rising suddenly to the east. The original place where these were first obtained by the aborigines is between the Split Rock and the west shore of the Great Lake, about forty miles distant, where Mr. Pitt has seen the ground covered with stones, partly broken and shaped--"like a workshop" -- by his statement to me.... In using the flints, the thumb was placed on the flat surface, and held by the other fingers resting in the palm of the hand, and the sharp edges used to cut the notches in the trees for climbing, cutting spears, and making the handles of the waddies rough, so as not to slip from the hand. They devoted much time to chipping the edges of the flints, and the small pieces broken off show very distinctly in good ones; the pieces not so marked, and smaller, are probably the pieces left in making them into shipshape at first. Whilst the flints were used to cut notches in the trees for the great toe to rest in, for climbing, the body was supported against the tree by a strong grass rope, passed round the tree and

the body, held by one hand, whilst with the other they used the flint.... The number of stones of the same material (but different shades in colour) which I found at that spot was upwards of 218.... Adjoining the spot where the flints were found there were also some common water-worn stones, broken in the edges, as if used for chipping, but of no interest otherwise. James Scott, Surveyor." Mr. James Rollings, in a letter addressed to Dr. Agnew, dated 5th May, 1873, says that in his youth he was constantly in the habit of seeing the aborigines of Tasmania, ... and that he had many opportunities of seeing how they used their stone knives and tomahawks. (1) 'The knives [referred to] when used for skinning kangaroos, etc., were held by the fore-finger and thumb, and the arm, being extended, was drawn rapidly towards the body. The carcase was afterwards cut up, and the knife was held in the same way. In cutting their hair, one stone was held under the hair, another stone being used above, and by this means the hair was cut, or rather, by repeated nickings, came off.' Mr. Smyth says of some other specimens he received from the Royal Society of Tasmania that 'they are of the same character as those already

---

"1. It will be seen here that while tomahawks are spoken of they are not described. Lloyd (see above, p. 115) speaks of tomahawks used in fishing for sport; these may of course have been introduced."

described. One--a heavy [158] thick stone, with a rough edge--was probably used for cutting wood. It is a fragment of a dark bluish-grey siliceous rock. Small flakes have been struck off to form a cutting edge. Another--a thinner and broader fragment, and triangular in shape--is formed of the same kind of rock, and the cutting edge is in like manner made by striking off thin small flakes. The weight of each is a little less than seven ounces' (II. pp. 402-407)."

1: Roth--158
116, 324, 412

(No date) 1890

Tasmanians

"Some fifteen years ago Mr. Morton Allport sent some stone implements to the Anthropological Institute, London, and accompanied them with the following letter: 'The stone implements are of the rudest make, but are frequently met with near old camping places and shell-mounds, often very far from the parent rocks. In one locality, on the high table-land in the centre of Tasmania, large numbers of these rough implements appear to have been manufactured, as chips of the rock, knocked off so long ago as to present weatherworn surfaces, abound, and cannot otherwise be accounted for. Many of the old residents in the country assure me they have frequently seen natives using these stones, both for skinning animals and for cutting notches in the thick bark of the eucalypti, while climbing. The stones were invariably grasped in the hand, never fixed in any kind of handle."

"At a meeting of the Royal Society of Tasmania, in June, 1873, a discussion having arisen concerning the use of stone implements by the aborigines of Tasmania, 'it appeared the general belief of the Fellows present was, that the stone axe with the handle attached was never used by our natives until taught by those from the neighbouring continent.' At this meeting Mr. James Scott volunteered the following information received from his late brother, Mr. Thomas Scott, who had had many opportunities of observing the habits, etc., of the aborigines: 'I may state that I never learnt that they used the flint implements as tomahawks, but invariably held them in their hands with the thumb resting on the flat surface, and turning the stone as found convenient to get the cutting edges where required. He had seen the men sitting for an hour or so at one time, chipping one flint with another, so as to give them the peculiar cutting sharp edges. The flints were used principally for cutting and sharpening spears, waddies, and for making notches or rough edges on the end of the waddies, for the hand to grasp firmly, in order to prevent slipping when in the act of throwing, etc. [159] They were also used for cutting notches in the bark of trees to enable the natives to climb . . . I have found them [flint implements] . . . always in the shape used by holding in the hand, never in the shape of a tomahawk . . . Some years ago I sent to England a round stone chipped all round to a circle about seven inches diameter,

and one inch and a half thick in the centre, to one inch thick at the edge. On this the females broke the bones of animals for the marrow, using another stone about six inches in diameter for striking.' In the same journal (Papers, etc. Roy. Soc. of Tasm. July, 1873) it is stated the aborigines 'merely used sharp-edged stones as knives. These were made sharp, not by grinding or polishing, but by striking off flakes by another stone till the required edge was obtained. As a very general, if not invariable, rule, one surface only was chipped in the process of sharpening. They were made from two different kinds of stone--the one apparently an indurated clay rock, the other containing a large proportion of silex.' Mr. Robert Thirkell also adds his testimony to the fact that the stones were used without handles of any sort (ibid. Aug. 1873). They used no slings (West, II. p. 84).

Besides the places mentioned above as localities where the aborigines obtained their stone implements, Mr. Jas. Scott adds the following in a later communication (ibid. August. 1875): 'First, about ten chains immediately in front and to the north-east of the stone hut in Stocker's Bottom, County of Somerset, parish of Peel. The second is about one mile more to the south-west, on Lot 443, on a branch of Dismal Creek, running out of Stocker's Bottom.' "